1:Srinivas E-5 (1940-42)1952 AW5 Coorg AW5

From 1788 till the defeat and death of Tippu in 1799, Vīra Rāja IV helped the English in their wars against Mysore. Richter tells us that in 1792 when Lord Cornwallis had driven Tippu into Seringapaṭam and the British occupied that island, 'about 5,000 Coorgs who had been carried away by Tippu, with their wives and children, altogether about 12,000 souls, made their escape in the confusion that ensued and returned to their native country'.[1] Their old homes and lands were restored to the returning exiles, and they seem to have been accepted back into the Coorg fold without difficulty.

Vīra Rāja ruled till 1809 when he died, leaving behind only daughters. This gave rise to the inevitable succession disputes in which, in the end, Linga Rāja II, younger brother of the dead king, emerged triumphant in 1811. He ruled till his death in 1820 when he was succeeded by his twenty-year-old son Chikka Vīra Rāja (Vīra Rāja V). The latter was an incompetent and sensuous tyrant, and in 1834 he was deposed by the British who annexed Coorg. The rule of the Lingāyaṭ Rājas had come to an end.

V

Lewis Rice tells us that Coorgs formed the bulk of the armies of the Rājas.[2] He writes,

> these mountaineers (Coorgs) had a considerable share of intrepidity and perseverance; stratagem entered largely into their system of tactics, in war they were remarkable for their predatory habits, and their neighbours accused them on those occasions of adding cruelty to pillage. Like the modern guerilla, though they were unable to contend openly with regular troops, they intercepted their supplies, cut off their communications, and harassed them by surprises, a species of warfare admirably adapted to second the natural difficulties that a hilly country must present. An intimate knowledge of it, a strict obedience, and a singular devotion to their chief [i.e. Rāja] accompanied by a remarkable attachment to their wilds and an equal gallantry in defending them, may in some measure perhaps have compensated the want of military skill.[3]

The system of land tenure prevalent in Coorg directly contributed to the maintenance and development of the military tradition of Coorgs. Land revenue was the principal source of the wealth of the Rājas. The assessment was based on a survey and

[1] Op. cit., vol. iii, p. 327. [2] Ibid. [3] Op. cit., p. 326.

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classification of all cultivated land in Coorg. In 1812, during the reign of Linga Rāja II, a general settlement was made and this was recorded in a book called *Hukum Nāma*. All cultivated land was divided into farms (*vargas*), and every farm was entered in the register along with the type of tenure it was held under.

The *jamma* system of land tenure under which most Coorgs held (and even now hold) land was the basis of their military tradition. It was an hereditary right passing from father to son, and was for this reason called *jamma*, a corruption of the Sanskrit *janma* which means 'birth'. It was not, however, confined to Coorgs. Kannaḍa Okkaligas, Tuḷu Gaudas, smiths (Airis), potters (Kumbāras), and Māpiḷḷa immigrants from Malabar enjoyed the privilege and prestige of holding land on *jamma* tenure. The Rājas occasionally offered *jamma* tenure as a bait both to induce certain artisan and trading castes from outside to settle down in Coorg and to induce local people to reclaim forest or waste land.

The *jamma* tenure was a very light one in terms of money, being only five rupees or a hundred *bhaṭṭis* of wet land. A hundred *bhaṭṭis* of wet land means an area of land producing a hundred *bhaṭṭis* of paddy. The area of land required to produce that amount varies according to the fertility of the soil, and arable land is classified into seven grades for purposes of assessment.

Along with the assesssed rice-field went two unassessed stretches of land: one was *bāṇé*, the highland adjacent to the rice-field and clothed with jungle from which the cultivator's joint family obtained its supply of fuel, timber, and forest produce; and the other was *bariké*, low-lying pasturage for the cultivator's cattle.

Legally, *jamma* land was impartible, inalienable, and could not be sublet without the permission of the Rāja, and, most important of all, people holding land on the *jamma* tenure were liable to be called up for military service. Richter writes in 1870 that 'the *jamma* ryots [cultivators] are still liable to be called out to repel outward aggression or quell internal disturbances, and to furnish all police- and treasure-guards, escorts, &c., in time of peace'.[1]

Every family holding *jamma* land had to perform guard duties for fifteen days in the year, during which time the guards were maintained at public expense though not paid. Not all the men of a joint family were employed on guard duties at the same time.

[1] Op. cit., p. 402.

1:Srinivas E-5 (1940-42)1952 AW5 Coorg AW5

Some were left free to look after land, and even those who were posted on guard duties were posted near their fields.

Jamma tenure conferred a double prestige on the holder in addition to the undoubted economic advantage. It signified that the holder had his roots in Coorg, and the duty of rendering military service to the state in times of emergency conferred on him the second type of prestige. The other important tenure in Coorg was *sāgu*, in which not only was land assessed at ten rupees per hundred *bhaṭṭis* of land, being twice the rate for *jamma* land, but also the holder was liable to render every type of service to the state except military service. During Richter's time, but for forty Coorgs, all the people holding land on *sāgu* tenure were non-Coorgs.[1]

The Rājas occasionally granted land on *jamma* tenure to non-Coorgs as a special mark of favour. Occasionally, Coorgs who held land on *jamma* tenure were transferred to the *sāgu* class as punishment for wrongs done by them.

VI

During the two centuries of rule by the Rājas, Coorg underwent a number of changes, political, administrative, and social. The authority of the local chieftains or Nāyakas was destroyed and the administration was centralized. The Rājas established a postal service (*anché*) for the use of officials only. Land was surveyed thoroughly, and the type of tenure under which each farm was held was recorded in the *Hukum Nāma* of Linga Rāja II (1811–20). The *Hukum Nāma* also contained a few paragraphs dealing with the powers of officials to try cases, civil and criminal, without reference to the Rāja. Serious offences like adultery, murder, and treason were tried by the Rāja himself. The recognition of the authority of the headman of a village and his council of elders was a general feature of the administrative system of the Rājas. They also recognized the authority of caste elders to try and settle caste disputes.

The long and bitter struggle with Haider and Tippu increased the sense of national identity of the inhabitants of Coorg. Coorgs played an important part in this struggle as they formed the bulk of the Rājas' soldiery, and also because they were specially selected for barbarous treatment by Tippu Sultan.

[1] Op. cit., p. 406.

1:Srinivas E-5 (1940-42)1952 AW5 Coorg AW5

trying to catch it. It chased the hare round the world. The moon was watching the chase from above and he dropped a rope to help the poor hare. The latter promptly climbed up the rope and settled down in the moon's lap. The cobra tries to catch its prey periodically, and whenever it does so, an eclipse occurs. When an eclipse is in progress Coorgs shout, 'O one-eyed Siddappa (cobra), set free, set free.' They shoot at the sky to make the cobra disgorge the hare.

The martial orientation of Coorg culture is not a recent phenomenon, nor does it seem to be in danger of dying out: in the last war over 1,300 Coorgs enlisted as soldiers, and the first Indian Commander-in-Chief of the Indian Army, General K. M. Cariappa, is a Coorg.

The *sanyasi*, the man who has renounced the world to pursue a life of prayer and contemplation, commands very great respect among Coorgs. He leads a celibate life, and in his case bachelordom does not constitute a drawback. The rules which apply to ordinary men do not apply to him. Preference for the *sanyasi* is found everywhere in India among Hindus.

4: Richter M, G-5 (ca. 1856-1870) 1870 AW5 Coorg AW5

the increasing difficulty of rice cultivation in some parts of the country, the change might be hailed as a most welcome improvement in the Coorg climate, which for the sake of human health might be still less loaded with moisture. 132

On the whole the influence of the Coorg climate with its average temperature of 66° 6′ is salubrious. The nights are cool throughout the year and Europeans are able to take exercise in the open air at all hours. European children in particular enjoy excellent health and their fat rosy cheeks form a striking contrast to the thin pale faces of those in the low country.

The rarified, often cold and damp air of Mercara with the usually prevailing high winds, necessarily does not agree with asthmatic and bronchial affections, chronic disorders of the liver and dysenteric complaints, but Frasерpet, which is 1,000 feet lower than Mercara, affords a salutary change during the rainy season.

The native troops, especially new arrivals from the low country, suffer much from the cold and damp and are, during their first year of acclimatization, subject to fever and bowel complaints, but in time even they enjoy the bracing climate of Mercara. [701] [164]

The climate of the valleys, particularly during the hot months preceding the monsoon, when, as the natives say, the old and new waters are mixed, is far from being healthy. Fevers, agues and bowel complaints are then very frequent and protracted. For the rest of the year the natives of the country pronounce the climate to be excellent especially after the monsoon. Besides the dreaded Coorg fever, which appears in its worst form, especially to Europeans, in the vicinity of Atur in south-east Coorg and about Sampáji on the western boundary, small-pox has laid a fearful hold upon the natives though vaccination is much in vogue. Cholera but seldom makes its appearance; and yields readily to treat- 132 164 [751]

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Rájah, Kushálnagara was sacked and the Fort burnt. In August Vírarája attacked the Fort of Beppunád. The garrison capitulated and obtained a free passage through Coorg. The Fort was destroyed. By dint of extraordinary exertions Buran-u-din, dividing his army into three columns, succeeded in throwing supplies into the Fort of Bhágamandala, but was repeatedly attacked and beaten on the march and had to fall back on Seringapatam. The capture of the Fort, which was of some strength, speedily followed. Vírarája planted his guns on the hill of Mumbáratu and pointed them with his own hand against the Fort which was well defended. After five days the place fell. Three copper-tiles of the temple at Bhágamandala had been destroyed by the Rájah's cannon balls, they were replaced by tiles of silver. After this achievement Vírarája sent a detachment into the Tulu country to take possession of Amara-Sulya which Lingarája had ceded to Hyder. There was now only Mercara left in the hands of the Musulmans, under Ali Beg, but he was cut off from all communication with Mysore and in fact a harmless prisoner.

A few remarks on the military force of Coorg at that time may prove of interest.

The Jamma-Coorgs holding their land by a military tenure in return for the immunities which they enjoyed, all able bodied men of this active and warlike peasantry constituted the Rájahs' military force, which, though irregular in its organization, was kept in constant practice of its duties. These personal services of the Choudigaras or Coorg soldiers as guards for a period of fifteen days at a time, enjoined by the Rájahs and admitted by the ryots, were rendered with cheerful obedience.

Under the chief command of the Rájah, the force, numbering at times from six to ten thousand Coorgs was subdivided into bodies of various strength, the smallest numbering from ten to hundred men under a Jemindar, any larger

4: Richter M, G-5 (ca. 1856-1870) 1870 AW5 Coorg AW5

and more indefinite number was commanded by the Káriagára, who again acted under a Sarva-káriagára or General; both were distinguished by a gold banded scarlet head-dress, the kombu toppi.

As the Coorg force was not a standing army, it received no pay. Whilst on active duty as guards or during warfare, the soldiers were maintained at the public expense, and being remarkable for their predatory habits, they largely shared with the Rájahs in the spoil. Without discipline and organization, the Coorgs displayed their strength chiefly behind their stockades and Cadangas. In the open field they rarely faced the attacks of regular troops.

c. Vírarája an ally of the East-Indian Company.

Conclusion of the alliance.

About this period the first connection between the English and the Coorgs took place. Desirous of gaining the friendship of so able a partizan and forseeing the strategical value of Coorg in the impending struggle with Tippu, the Government of the Company eagerly seized the proffered hand of Vírarája who dreaded and hated Tippu, from whom he could expect no mercy and whose assurances and promises, he knew, he could never trust. His hopes depended on his success in gaining the support of a powerful ally. His eyes were directed towards the rising star of the Company. The union with Tippu's enemies was therefore effected without difficulty. After the receipt of orders from Bombay to conclude in the name of the British Government an offensive and defensive alliance with the Rájah of Coorg, Robert Taylor, the English Chief at Tellicherry invited the Rájah to a conference. Accompanied by Capt. Brown, who had been sent to conduct him to the head-quarters of the Company on the Western Coast, Vírarája repaired thither in October 1790.

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of the Jail, exercises the powers of a Magistrate over its inmates, who are superintended by a European Jailor.

The *Police*, with the exception of a small regular body of a miserable description in Mercara and Vírájenderpet, still maintains its rural character, as best adapted to the country.

According to the returns of the annual "Judicial Reports," the inhabitants of Coorg are neither remarkable[1] for their litigiousness, nor for an excess of criminality.

3. ADMINISTRATION OF REVENUE.

a. *Land Revenue.*

The Land Revenue constituted the chief source of the wealth of the Coorg Rájahs. It still forms the principal item in the annual income of Government. It will, therefore, be of interest to analyze the mode of assessment, peculiar to Coorg, for generations in use and still upheld by the British Government. The settlement was made in 1812[2] by Lingarájender, who caused the Shist accounts to be preserved in a kind of Domesday-Book in which all the vargas or farms are registered with great detail and accuracy, noting also the tenure under which each varga is held.

According to this *quasi settlement in perpetuity* we have to distinguish, besides the rentfree holdings, *four different kinds of tenures of land: Jamma, Ságu, Umbali and Jódi-tenure*, an arrangement nearly allied to what is called "Shivappa Naik's Shist" i. e. an assessment fixed in the time of Shivappa Naik, a polygar of Naggara.

The *Jamma-tenure*, from the Sanscrit "janma," a word conveying the meaning of "hereditary by birth," is the holding of the privileged class, called *Jamma-ryots*, comprising: Coorgs, Amma-Coorgs, Hegadas, Eimbokalas, Airis, Koyavas, Moplas and Gaudas. The light assessment of Rs. 5 per 100 butties of wet land with its accompanying Báné and Baríké was made originally on condition of military and general

[1] [Errata: this should read "remarkable" neither." See Corrigenda, Col. 116, p. 479 -- Analyst]

[2] [Errata: This should read "in 1813." -- Analyst]

4: Richter M, G-5 (ca. 1856-1870) 1870 AWS Coorg AWS

651 service to the State. The Jamma-ryots are still liable to be
423 called out to repel outward aggression or quell internal dis-
565 turbances, and to furnish all Police- and Treasure-guards,
701 escorts, etc. in time of peace. Excepting old men and boys, there are now 7070 active Jamma-ryots of whom 4910 are Coorgs and, next in number, 1244 Gaudas.

423 The *Butty account* is a peculiar one and dates from the
651 time of Lingarájender, who in 1813 had all the ricelands
433 measured and the result registered; 100 butties of wet land mean an area which produces 100 butties at 80 seers per butty of paddy or rice in the husk. Since this produce, however, is depending on the fertility of the soil, it is clear, that the area of 100 butties varies according to the nature of the ground. There are 7 different qualities of fields, ascertained or supposed to produce 8, 10, 12, 14, 16, 18, and 20 seers of paddy respectively on an area of land, containing 256 square feet or a square of one kólu (bambu) 16 feet long, the original measure used for determining this account. To produce then 100 butties or 8,000 seers of paddy from these seven different kinds of fields, 1000, 800, 660⅔, 570, 500, 440⅘, 400 times 256 square feet or about 5·87, 4·8, 3·92, 3·35, 2·93, 2·61, 2·35 acres respectively are required. As a fair average, therefore, 3 acres may be assigned as an equivalent of 100 butties of land.

311 *Bánè* is the highland adjoining the ricefields and generally clothed with forest from which each farm obtains its firewood, manure, grass, etc.

651 *Barikè* is the low swampy portion of land adjacent to or
731 below the paddy fields, it remains uncultivated and is used
423 for grazing purposes.

No remission of the Jamma-rent is ever made, except under extraordinary circumstances, such as the death of several members of a family, the entire destruction of property by fire or the loss of a large number of cattle. In these cases

4: Richter M, G-5 (ca. 1856-1870) 1870 AW5 Coorg AW5

5. POST OFFICE AND TELEGRAPHS.

Besides the regular postal service with Offices at Mercara and Vírájpet, there is a local post called Anché, originally established by the Rájahs and still principally used for official communication between the district functionaries and the heads of departments, who are exempt from postage, but it is open also to the public both for letters and packages on the same terms as the Queen's Post. By its means 160,999 letters, etc. have been despatched in 1869-70, whilst the Queen's Post at the two offices transmitted 147,309 letters, etc. over the three lines, Mercara—Mysore,—Cannanore,—Mangalore. For the Anché-tappál there are five lines:

1.	from Mercara	to Fraserpet	20	miles.
2.	"	" Kiggatnád	35	"
3.	"	" Kodlipet	46	"
4.	"	" Nálkanád	20	"
5.	"	" Madyanád	5	"

In localities away from these lines postal communication is very imperfect and public business much impeded and often seriously inconvenienced.

Mercara has lately become the Head-quarters of the Malabar Coast Division of the *Government Telegraph Department* and consequently the Bangalore, Cannanore, and Mangalore lines are here united and Mercara is brought into telegraphic communication with all parts of the civilized world. During 1869-70 1595 messages have been received and despatched, and yielded an income of Rs. 1,798—8.

6. MILITARY DEPARTMENT.

Considering the military services rendered by the Jammaryots in the times of the Coorg Rájahs and their martial spirit and loyalty, so often applauded by the English Government,

4: Richter M, G-5 (ca. 1856-1870) 1870 AW5 Coorg AW5

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648 it may cause surprise, that no advantage has hitherto been taken of such excellent material for local military service, by organising all able-bodied men into a Coorg militia under English Officers and keeping a small body of men for short periods on duty at Mercara, instead of a Sepoy-Regiment, especially since it was the loyal Coorgs and not the Sepoys, who suppressed the insurrection anno 1837. Lately some proposal was indeed put forward to abolish Mercara as a military station, but the strategical position of the country, adjoining the foreign territory of Mysore on the one side and the Mopla inhabited districts of Madras on the other, was deemed of sufficient importance, to continue its occupation by a Regiment of Madras Native Infantry.

712 Mercara having been declared a *Military Cantonment*, (vide page 1009 Fort St. Georg Gazette 1856) the following are the specifications of bearings and distances of its boundaries.

Station.	Compass bearing.	Distance in feet.	REMARKS.
1	210°	312	Station 1. Opposite entrance to Fort. Boundary follows outer side of main road to station 5.
2	201	225	
3	174	315	
4	131	288	Station 5. Opposite the gate of the Roman Catholic Priest's house; boundary leaves the main road and ascends the hill in rear of the Roman Catholic Priest's house, skirting the compound which it leaves outside the limits, it continues to follow the crest of the range of hills overhanging the Mangalore ghat till it reaches Station 19.
5	261	150	
6	181	173	
7	126	77	
8	148	73	
9	200	874	
10	285	130	
11	275	191	
12	178	318	Station 18. A slightly elevated peak intersected by a Coorg ditch and rampart, boundary follows this ditch down the slope of the hill to the burying ground which it encloses, traversing its west and south side to station 20 and thence descending the valley in which the Lines are situated to station 21. At 330 feet it strikes the bank of a Nullah along which it continues to station 28. From 28 to 34 it runs through enclosed gardens
13	261	184	
14	218	165	
15	359	90	
16	312	162	
17	185	181	
18	285	485	
19	23	175	
20	41	315	